



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, February 5, 2008

08-18

DON ARTHUR WEBSTER CONVICTED OF SEX TRAFFICKING AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced today, February 5, 2008, that, after deliberating two days, a jury of seven men and five women found Don Arthur Webster, also known as Jerry Starr and Daddy, of Anchorage, Alaska, guilty of numerous counts of sex trafficking and drug trafficking.

Webster was found guilty on two counts of trafficking a minor to engage in a commercial sex act, nine counts of trafficking of adults by force, fraud, or coercion, two counts of distribution of crack cocaine to a pregnant woman, four counts of distribution of crack cocaine to individuals under the age of 21, and eight counts of distribution of crack cocaine. Finally, Webster was also convicted of possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute it, maintaining a premises for the purpose of manufacturing and distributing crack cocaine, and manufacturing crack cocaine. The United States called 40 witnesses who testified over a period of 11 days. The United States rested its case on January 30, and jury deliberations began the afternoon of February 1. The defense elected not to present a case.

Webster, age 51, was tried before Senior United States District Court Judge H. Russel Holland in Anchorage, Alaska.

The evidence presented at trial established that Webster would target women who were homeless, in low paying jobs, or runaways and invite them to work for his escort service. Those services, which included Foxy Roxies, Sunshine Girls, American Beauties, Kotton Kandy, Tiffani's, Tickle Your Fancy, and Lickety Split, were purported to be "escort services" in which an individual would pay for another person's "time and company." In fact, they were fronts for Webster's illegal prostitution business.

Webster would provide adult women and underage girls to engage in sex acts in exchange for money with men who called the escort service phone lines. Webster's prostitution business operated on an "out call" basis, meaning that the females would meet the caller at his residence or at a hotel paid for by the caller. The caller would pay a fixed hourly rate plus a transportation fee to have sex with the female who would meet him, but would pay additional money in exchange for sex acts or drugs which were provided by Webster.

The women were required to turn all of the money they earned over to Webster. When they returned from a "date," they would receive an "issue," which was approximately a gram of cocaine. The

women described going on up to 10 dates per day, every day, with no days off. They would work up to five days in a row without sleeping. All of the victims indicated that they were addicted to crack cocaine when they were involved with Webster's "escort services."

The youngest victim testified that she was thirteen when she began engaging in commercial sex acts on Webster's behalf, and that she continued to do so for two years. The other minors were between the ages of 15 and 17 when they worked with Webster.

The women all lived in houses in the Anchorage area that were paid for by Webster. Webster imposed rules on the women living in the houses. They could not have any visitors to the house, nor talk to anyone outside of the "family." They could not purchase anything without the Defendant's knowledge, and had to provide receipts if they did. They could not talk to men unless they were getting paid, and they could not obtain drugs from anyone other than Webster.

Webster would physically assault the women, and would often assault one woman in front of others in order to make an example of her. The victims described being repeatedly choked, punched, slapped, bound, and strip searched either by Webster or by someone acting at his direction. Webster threatened to pour boiling water on one victim while another was in the room. When one victim left the house, the defendant found her and dragged her back by her hair. Two victims described "the box," which was a small crawl space or closet. Webster would lock them in the box as punishment for disrespecting him. Several victims described a family meeting at which Webster dragged one young woman into a room. The witnesses said they could hear the sounds of beating, and that the woman emerged bruised and bloody, with chunks of her hair missing. One victim said Webster raped her, and several others testified that Webster insisted he have sex with them.

Judge Holland scheduled sentencing for April 25, 2008. The law provides for a minimum 15-year sentence and total sentence of up to life in prison on the sex trafficking counts, a fine of \$250,000 on each count, or both. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed is based on the seriousness of the offenses and the defendant's criminal history.

Webster was detained prior to trial, and will remain in custody pending sentencing.

Assistant United States Attorneys Audrey Renschen and Kimberley Sayers-Fay, with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Anchorage, and Trial Attorney Alexandra Gelber, with the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, prosecuted this case.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Anchorage Police Department Vice Unit, in conjunction with the Alaska Human Trafficking Task Force, conducted the investigation that led to the conviction of Webster.

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